

Save Foggy Bottom...It's Where We Live!

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Foggy Bottom Mourns Maria Tyler

Maria Tyler, longtime Foggy Bottom resident and former ANC Commissioner, died Feb. 17 after a long illness. She is survived by a sister and brother-in-law and by her husband Geoffrey. The Tylers lived on 25th Street.

As a commissioner for ANC-2A03, Maria helped make many major improvements to the area, working to establish the Foggy Bottom Historic District, persuading the city to ban buses from its narrow streets, and arranging for lowering the zoning classification for the townhouse community.

A significant project of hers was the enhancement of the 2400 and 2500 blocks of K



Foggy Bottom's Face: Maria Tyler (left), with former FBA President Chris Lamb at a Foggy Bottom neighborhood block party, in an undated photo.

FBN archive photo

Street, working with city officials for the placement of trees, wider sidewalks, median strips and safer pedestrian crossings of that heavily traveled road. The result was an attractive and more residential look to the blocks.

A native of Lithuania, Maria earned a B.A. from Wellesley, an M.A. in economics from GWU, and was a senior economist with the International Monetary Fund.

—Ellie Becker

Maria Tyler, Miracle Maker

By Ellie Becker

Foggy Bottom has lost one of its most caring and persistent champions with the death of Maria Tyler. In an award presented to her by the Foggy Bottom Association, she was described as a "miracle maker" for several major projects she saw to completion, making significant improvements in the lives of her neighbors. All who knew her know that no person other than Maria has made such a lasting impact on Foggy Bottom.

Think of it: without Maria there would be no Historic District, the cherished enclave of early 20th-century houses (and a few that are older). She later persuaded city officials to lower their zoning classification, affording increased protection

for the low-rise residences. When a developer planned a huge building at the site of the historic Cooper Houses on K Street, her successful appeal of the zoning order resulted in preservation of the houses.

Faced with an obnoxious throng of tourist buses visiting one of the hotels, her efforts brought about a ban on buses on the historic district's narrow residential streets. And thanks to her negotiations, the 7-11 improved its appearance and operations.

A graduate of GWU, Maria was not anti-student, but was a consistent foe of GWU's land-use policies which did not and still do not provide adequate

Snow Thoughts

The first snowstorm of the year last month was a lovely gift to Foggy Bottom — it came on the weekend, made the area a fairland of white, and mostly was gone by Monday morning. I knew it was going to snow, because my flowering quince had bloomed, and that quirky tree gets snowed on every year.

I was out in the snow, walking along the covered sidewalk in front of Potomac Plaza, and encountered a bevy of small brown birds cowering next to the building to escape what then was a very heavy snowfall. I was filled with guilt that I had happened along, making them leave the haven they had found to brave the storm. Another sign of the joy of nature was a group of yellow pansies poking their heads out; they seem to be indestructible.

It brought back memories of an earlier February storm, over Washington's Birthday weekend years ago, when 25 inches fell. The atmosphere became a festive one, with neighbors out on the streets, shoveling and sharing shovels, throwing snowballs, building snowmen and enjoying the outdoors. Everyone was home; there was no way out!

Back then the city lacked snowplows, and in one instance, along came a dump truck with a plow on the front, but with tires so worn it got stuck. So here we were, lending a hand to dig him out so he could plow some of the two feet of snow off the streets. But the first truck which sallied down New Hampshire Ave. that weekend was a Safeway delivery truck, replenishing the stock for residents who were more or less trapped.

Some things never change — this year, just before the storm, the checkout lines ran back to the meat counter, just as they had in the past.

—Ellie Becker

ANC Opposes 20th St. Hotel on Residential Concerns

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A voted unanimously at its Feb. 15 meeting to oppose a proposed hotel on 20th Street between E and F Streets, largely due to residential concerns the project would lead to more noise and congestion in the area. The project could be reopened again, however, if the developers can show progress in meeting those concerns.

Owners of a parking garage at the site at 515 20th St. scrapped plans to build a rooftop pool on the site, but want to build what they termed a "very high-end" 147-room Courtyard by Marriott hotel there. The proposed plans were presented by garage owner Steven Gewirtz and architects.

But local resident Elizabeth Elliott, who lives in the York right across the street from the garage, said "the density is [already] pretty incredible" in the area, in speaking against the plan. There are a large number of student residences in the area, and with "another glass wall, the noise level is going to go off the scale," she told the ANC in public comments.

"Aesthetically, while it may be an improvement, it will have a negative effect on the area," said Elliott, an FBA board member and former chair of the ANC.

'Canyon Effect'

ANC Chair Vince Micone

agreed with Elliott. "My concern in that a 'canyon effect' is going to occur on that street," he said, in offering a resolution opposing the plans as drawn. The commission's resolution did include language for the developers to continue negotiations with the ANC on any modifications.

The ANC also included in its vote a measure to seek legal assistance in the case. And while not in its motion, the two sides agreed to attempt to delay a scheduled Board of Zoning Adjustment hearing set for March 14.

The garage takes in about 420 cars each day, with a surge of traffic in the morning and evening rush hours, but is generally quiet on off-hours. Residents, Elliott said, would not be so lucky with a 24/7 hotel operating in their midst.

Local GW students also voiced concerns about any potential construction disrupting the heavily-walked student routes on 20th St., and residents said the hotel's design, which did not include a driveway, would clog the busy street with taxis and limos.

Also at the meeting, the ANC formally welcomed ANC2A02 Commissioner Michael Thomas, who attended but did not participate in the meeting, as its newest member, replacing the departing Richard Price.

—FBN

THE FOGGY BOTTOM NEWS

c/o West End Library

24th & L Streets, NW, Washington, DC 20037

Editor-in-Chief: Michael G. Malloy
foggybottomnews@yahoo.com

The Foggy Bottom News is published by the Foggy Bottom Association as a service to its members and provides information on FBA and neighborhood news, programs, activities and other events of interest to FBA members. Contributions and story ideas are welcome, but the FBN reserves the right to edit or hold pieces as space requires.

The Foggy Bottom Association was formed by a group of citizens in 1955 and was formally incorporated in 1959. Attendance at FBA meetings is open to all residents of Foggy Bottom and the West End.

FBA Officers:

PRESIDENT — Joy Howell • VICE PRESIDENT — Barbara Spillinger
SECRETARY — Jill Nevius • TREASURER — Russell Conlan
MEMBERSHIP — Edward B. Gable Jr.

FBA Board of Directors:

Ellie Becker, Joseph G. Chaplick, Elizabeth B. Elliott,
Jacqueline G. Lemire, Michael G. Malloy, James R. O'Leary,
Ronald Cocome (Immediate Past President; Ex Officio)

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Foggy Bottom Folks

By Ellie Becker

Charlie Clapp, longtime Foggy Bottom resident and activist, died on Feb. 13 at the age of 83. He lived at the Westbridge on Pennsylvania Avenue, served as an ANC Commissioner and as ANC Chair during the 1980s. During his career, he worked for the Interstate Commerce Commission and the U.S. Postal Rate Commission.

Among those attending his funeral were D.C. Councilmember David Catania and fellow commissioners Steve Levy and Ralph Rosenbaum. During the services, he was described as "loving education, crusty and a flirt." He was also famous for recruiting people for

Republican Party activities and also for the Westbridge Board of Directors. Jackie Lemire, a friend and fellow Westbridge resident, quipped that Charlie would probably "greet you in heaven and ask you to serve on the Board."

We were sorry to hear of the death of **Mrs. Marcel Weidmaier**, a resident of the Watergate. Marcel is also the owner of Bijou, a St. Bernard, whom he says is a perfect apartment dog: St. Bernards don't bark and don't need a great deal of exercise. Her son Robert is the owner of Marcel's Restaurant on Pennsylvania Avenue, named for his father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Soon to be confirmed as an ambassador is **Jeanine Jackson**, who lives on Eye Street with her husband **Mark**. Both are career

Foreign Service officers (he has just retired), and she will soon represent the United States in the West African Republic of Burkina Faso. The Jacksons were most recently in Afghanistan, where she was the first U.S. diplomat to serve after the fall of the Taliban. Their earlier assignments included Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, and Kenya. During her recent stay stateside, Jeanine was management coordinator for the establishment of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, and earlier worked on opening embassies in the former Soviet republics. At her confirmation hearing **Sen. Mike Enzi** (R-Wyo.) praised the Wyoming native's contributions and those of her husband, commenting that "we are going to get two great representatives – two for the price of one."

Maria Tyler, Miracle Maker

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student housing, resulting in students occupying many off-campus buildings, replacing tax-paying residents.

Her arguments before zoning officials, the City Council, Historic Preservation Review Board and other bodies were always devastatingly well-thought out, sound, and presented, employing all her education, experience and passion for Foggy Bottom. Another person of Maria's stature, persistence and accomplishments for our beloved Foggy Bottom will not be seen again, and she will be missed.

Additional Tributes

Barbara Spillinger, former ANC Chair and current Vice President of the FBA: "The preservation of historic buildings, so prevalent in Foggy Bottom, is due in large measure to the efforts of Maria Tyler. She deserves our unending gratitude."

Ed Gable, resident of ANC-2A03 and the FBA's membership director: "We would see her, as a

commissioner, walk the neighborhood on a regular basis to talk to people, finding out for herself what was going on."

Elizabeth Elliott, former ANC Commissioner and Chair, and current FBA Board member: "She knew what was important and she knew what she wanted for her community. Her single-mindedness and determination in achieving those ends were amazing to watch. While Maria's style was not 'easy' or laid back and she did not suffer fools gladly, she was a force to contend with. We are the beneficiaries of her successes."

Gary Burch, transportation consultant and the highway official overseeing the K Street improvements, whom Maria unstintingly cajoled and persuaded of her ideas for the project: "Maria was a tenacious advocate for the Foggy Bottom community she loved. Through her efforts and with her guidance and advice, we highway officials were able to provide sensitive improvements" to K Street and the adjacent roads.

Michael Malloy, editor, *FBN*:

"I didn't know Maria very well when I got involved with the FBA and local issues, but she 'got it' when our moderate-income housing was threatened by rezoning and, without us even asking her, routinely spoke out for us and helped encourage us in the West End, even though we weren't in her [ANC] district."

Ann Savage, who succeeded Maria as ANC-2A03 Commissioner: "Maria was not only instrumental in getting the historic neighborhood established but in maintaining it and carrying on its beauty. Her work will live long beyond her lifetime."

COMING SOON: FBA's Preferred Merchants Program

The FBA's Preferred Merchants Program will include new discounts and promotions from area vendors, and we'll profile local merchants in the FBN for residents to check out and discover. Coming soon!

SAVE THE DATES!

2006 FBA General Membership Meetings:

March 27	June 26 –
April 24	Annual meeting
May 22	Speakers TBA

All meetings at Melrose Hotel, 2430 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, at 7:30 pm.